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CIA/SAVA /WVIND 71022p



WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 20 February 1971

NSA Declassification/Release instructions on File.

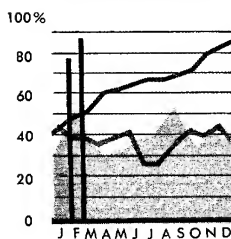
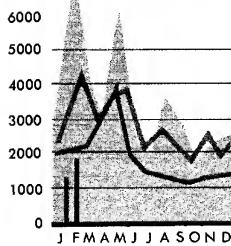
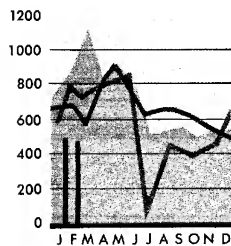
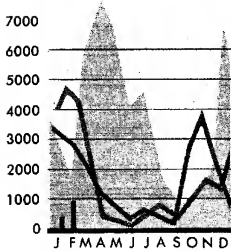
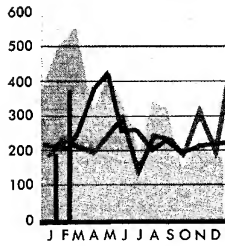
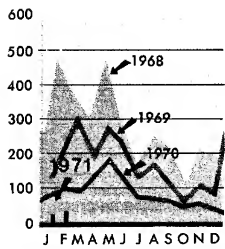
For the President Only

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SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1971

Weekly average for each month

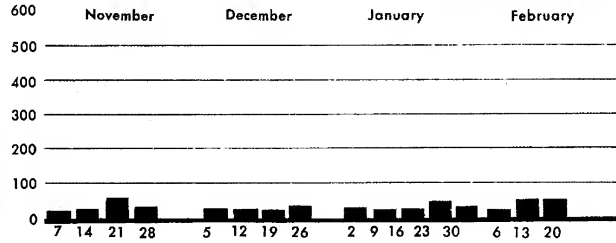


NOVEMBER 1970 - FEBRUARY 1971

Weekly data as reported

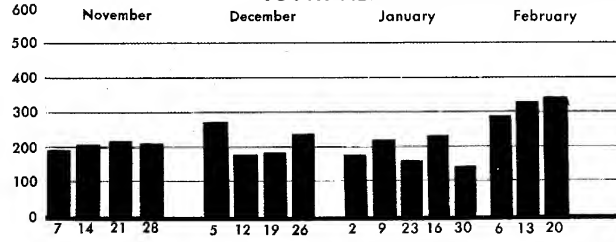
US BATTLE DEATHS

increased to 58 from last week's 51.



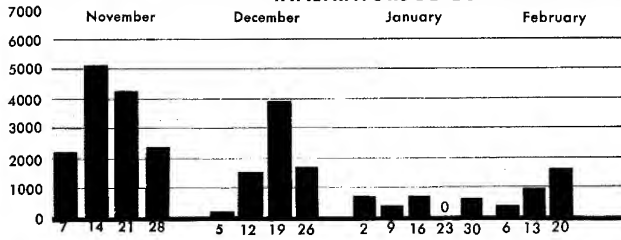
SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS

rose to 323 from the 312 of last week. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.



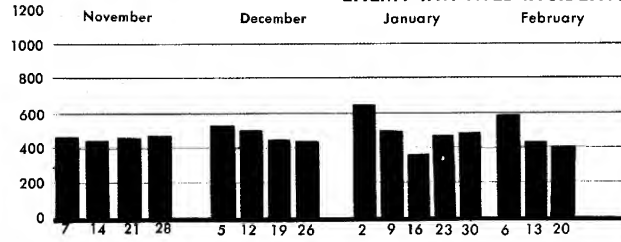
INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE

stand at one detected and two gap fill groups with a combined strength of some 1,700. The total number of infiltrators since 1 October 1970 is now an estimated 43,600 - 46,100.



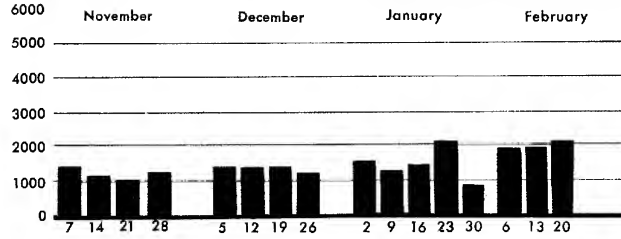
ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS

decreased to 402 from last week's 426.



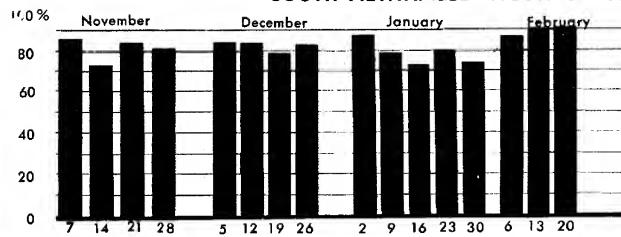
ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION

increased to 2,260 from the 1,906 of last week.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS

as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces rose slightly from last week's 90% to 91%.



Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

In South Vietnam, enemy-initiated activity has been at a relatively low level, although in northern Military Region (MR) 1 numerous attacks by fire and small ground actions were mounted against Allied bases and lines of communication supporting Operation LAM SON 719 in southern Laos. Activity will probably remain high in northern MR 1, but little major change seems likely in other parts of the country.

In north Laos, harassing pressure is being kept up around Luang Prabang. The sector of real concern, however, remains Vang Pao's headquarters at Long Tieng. The Communists have continued to step up their probing and artillery attacks on Long Tieng itself and the outposts which contribute to its defense. The current pattern of Communist activity strongly suggests methodical preparations for a major assault. In south Laos, the Operation DESERT RAT interdiction task force has met only minimal resistance as it has expanded its area of operations along Route 23 south of Muong Phine. To the east, ARVN forces engaged in Operation LAM SON 719 are encountering strong enemy resistance in their push toward the large enemy supply complex around Tchepone. Final casualty figures for an engagement in which an ARVN Ranger Battalion was attacked by an estimated enemy regimental size unit were 100 friendly killed and 148 wounded against enemy losses estimated to be over 600.

In Cambodia, ARVN forces on Operation TOAN THANG 01/71 continue to make significant contact in the Chup Plantation area, but only light and scattered fighting has been reported in other parts of the country.

Enemy Infiltration

During the week, one infiltration group was detected and two "gap fill" groups were accepted. These three groups are assessed as having a combined strength of some 1,700, raising the infiltration estimate since 1 October 1970 to 43,600 - 46,100.

The detected group, 2275, was positively identified in the Laotian Panhandle. Its detection adds to our concern regarding the status of the "Vinh window," which heretofore had provided our earliest and most complete data on infiltration starts in North Vietnam. Several weeks ago we flagged a "gap" of 10 groups possibly in the pipeline but missed coming through BT-18 near Vinh (i.e., the groups between 2272, positively spotted in North Vietnam on 18 December, and 2283, positively spotted in Laos on 27 January). Since group 2275 falls within this series, its positive detection in Laos reinforces the evidence of the past month that a number of infiltration groups have moved undetected into the infiltration pipeline in North Vietnam. Analysis of the numerical designators suggests that seven other possibly missed groups may be in the system and that the current infiltration estimate could be some 3,900 higher than the 43,600 - 46,100 figure given above.

In the logistics field, as of 20 February, the Communists were still moving large volumes of supplies southward through the Tchepone area by making use of the multiple-route structure to the west and south of the town. The size of the flow cannot be measured with precision, but available evidence indicates that traffic continued moving south on the by-passes at high levels. East of Tchepone, however, the Communists clearly are having problems in moving supplies as a result of Operation LAM SON 719. Not only has movement to the southern Laotian Panhandle via Route 92 been cut off, but the enemy is having difficulties in supplying units deployed in the area west of the DMZ and south on Route 9.

South Vietnam Developments

GVN Foreign Minister Lam, under instructions from President Thieu, has suggested to the press and U.S. officials that the site of the peace talks be changed from Paris to another location. The GVN proposal was prompted by recent anti-Saigon demonstrations in Paris and French government statements deploring the ARVN incursion into Laos.

It is probably intended more as an expression of GVN irritation at the French government's attitude than as a serious suggestion.

The GVN cabinet shuffle and reorganization, slated to involve several civilian ministries, should be announced shortly ("maybe before March 1," according to Thieu). Thieu commented to Ambassador Bunker that he undoubtedly would be accused of making the cabinet changes in anticipation of the fall presidential elections, but he stated that his real purpose is to have an effective cabinet.

Senator Tran Quang Thuan, who has close ties to the An Quang leadership, has expressed his exasperation with "Big" Minh's inertia in organizing a presidential campaign. At the same time, Progressive Nationalist Movement Chairman Nguyen Van Bong, who at various times has been reported to be either in or out of the Minh camp, has said that his group very much wants to be on the winning side, and will not announce its official candidate endorsement until May or June. Bong also said that Minh may decide not to run. Meanwhile, President Thieu commented to Ambassador Bunker that he thinks Minh, in the face of conflicting counsel by his advisors, may simply throw up his hands and decide against running. According to Thieu, if Minh does run, it will be only because he has been pushed into it by others.

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